

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

RLJ-1877

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PART 82: THE MAN OF GOD

SECOND RETURN OF EXILES

A second group of exiles returned to Jerusalem in 458 BC under the leadership of Ezra, who had prepared himself by studying under the rabbis in Babylon. His sole purpose of moving to Jerusalem was to begin teaching the Old Testament to the Jewish people. According to Jewish sources, only some 1,500 Jewish men – along with their wives and children – returned to Jerusalem with the priest. **Ezra 7:1-10**

King Artaxerxes I sent a letter with Ezra which served two purposes: a letter of credit and a letter of authority. This took place before Artaxerxes I later issued a moratorium on rebuilding the temple. **verses 11-23**

The king also exempted Ezra and his priestly staff from all taxes and custom duties. **verse 24**

Ezra was also commissioned to set up a justice system in Jerusalem and the land of Israel in which the Jews lived. **verse 25**

Ezra and his appointed judges were given authority to punish people who broke the laws he crafted. He was also given power to issue death sentences for criminals that broke the law. **verse 26**

Ezra rejoiced that the Persian king had given him such broad powers. **verses 26-28**

WHO ARRIVED WITH EZRA?

Ezra did not bring people who could take part in the construction of the new temple, nor did he bring men of war with him. His mission was simply to re-establish the rabbinical system in the land of Judah and restore the Torah teaching to the Jewish population.

Ezra did not want to arrive with a group that was not organized and he subsequently ordered his people to stop at Ahava, which is believed to have been a place eight days travel north of Babylon. **Ezra 8:15**

When he discovered there were no Levites among the group, he requested that such men be sent from Babylon. **verses 16-19**

The Jewish leadership in Babylon fulfilled the request and also sent 220 Nethinims.¹ **verse 20**

PROCLAIMING A FAST

Ezra was a genuine follower of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and he wanted to be sure the journey and their mission in Jerusalem was according to the will of God. He also asked for protection against robbers. He was a true man of God, believing that if

¹ Nethinim were servants (janitors) who performed menial service in the temple.



they sought God's protection, it was not necessary to ask the king for a detachment of soldiers to travel with them. **verses 21-23**

Ezra's caravan was much smaller than the one Zerubbabel had led, but they carried a lot of gold and silver that would attract robbers. God protected them and the group arrived to Jerusalem unmolested. **verses 24-32**

The silver and the gold were handed over to the men in charge of the temple. **verses 33-34**

This was followed by a sacrificial service to God. **verse 35**

Ezra established his authority with the governor of Judah. **verse 36;**

If you are not walking with the Lord, confess your sins, and ask God to use the remainder of your time on earth for His glory. **1 John 1:5-10**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?

Appendix A

KINGS OF BABYLON

Nebuchadnezzar II reigned from 605-562 BC.

Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach) ruled from 562-560 BC until he was overthrown and killed by Neriglissar.

Neriglissar reigned from 560-556 BC. He was married to one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters.

Labashi-Marduk was the son of Neriglissar. He was overthrown within one to three months when he began to reign in 556 BC.

Nabonidus ruled from 556 BC until 539 BC when the Babylonian were conquered by Cyrus II.

Belshazzar served as co-regent with his father, Nabonidus, who went on a pilgrimage.

KINGS OF PERSIA

Cyrus II reigned from 550-530 BC.

Cambyses II inherited the throne and reigned for 8 years from 530-522 BC.

Bardiya replaced his brother in 522 BC. but reigned for less than a year until he was overthrown by Darius.

Darius I would go on to rule from 522-486 BC.

Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) inherited the throne from his father and reigned from 486-465 B.C. He famously invaded Greece with a large army. King Leonidas and his famous 300 Spartans delayed his progress at Thermopylae and then the Persians were soundly defeated by Themistocles at Salamis. Esther was famously chosen to be his queen sometime after he returned home.

Artaxerxes I reigned from 465-424 BC.

Xerxes II briefly reigned in 424 BC. for 45 days until he was assassinated by his half-brother, Sogdianus.

Sogdianus reigned from 424-423 BC. until he was murdered by Darius II six months later.

Darius II reigned from 423-404 BC

Artaxerxes II was the son of Darius II. He reigned from 404-358 BC.